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US sanctions four Singaporean LNG shipping firms

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Four Singapore-based LNG shipping firms have been sanctioned by the United States for their links to Russian gas producer Novatek.

Singapore-based firms LNG Alpha Shipping, LNG Beta Shipping, LNG Delta Shipping and LNG Gamma Shipping are all majority-owned by New Transhipment FZE, a Novatek subsidiary based in the United Arab Emirates, according to the US State Department.

The four are the registered owners of LNG carriers *North Air*, *North Mountain*, *North Way* and *North Sky* respectively – vessels that had previously been identified as being part of Russia's dark fleet.

Talk of Russia potentially amassing a shadow fleet of LNG carriers started earlier this year when industry experts warned Moscow could implement a similar scenario to what it did with oil and product tankers to circumvent sanctions.

In an attempt to circumvent sanctions on Russia's revitalised Arctic LNG 2 project, "Russian companies have engaged in efforts to procure secondhand LNG tankers, predominantly through front

companies in third country jurisdictions, to make up for a critical shortage of available tankers for the Arctic LNG 2 project,” the State Department said in a statement.